

# IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,200, are heartbreaking and touching. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed from June remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

I was/am in full support of your GPRA Energy Legislation. You were right on. Please continue to fight for energy independence for Idaho and the U.S. This is essential to our national security and prosperity. It is never too late to do the right thing (even if we should have done it ten years ago). Please keep the pressure to allow Congress to vote on crucial energy legislation. We deserve to know how our Congress stands/votes on important issues like this. I am also in favor of the President calling an emergency session of Congress to pass energy legislation. It is that important.

Drill here, drill now, pay less.

TERESA, Twin Falls.

Since July 11, [2008,] crude oil prices have declined over 16% yet gasoline prices at the pump have remained steady. When is Congress going to start putting real pressure on the oil companies to stop gouging the American consumer? If Congress wants to turn the economy around, then start by addressing energy prices. The oil companies raised gas prices as crude oil prices escalated but there is no indication that the reverse is true as crude prices continue to come down. Enough is enough.

GALYN.

You have expressed a desire to hear of our experiences and hardships with the rise in gasoline prices. I have a daily routine when I get to work. I get online and check for recent news on gasoline prices and so forth. The next thing I do is check on local gas prices by utilizing Mapquest.com. It is severely disappointing to see that our eastern Idaho gasoline prices have stabilized at \$4.12 a gallon when the national average is below \$3.90 a gallon, according to a recent yahoo.com article. Be that as it may, \$3.90 is still a harsh amount. This has become a pain not only economically but domestically as well. Between my wife and I for the last month and a half, there has been strife about our finances and being able to afford the next meal, the bills, and all that we wish we could do to make an advance in finances. Colleagues and friends would argue the same

domestic problems. So you see that this problem is not only hurting America economically but socially as well.

I have done my part in decreasing the amount I drive and the amount of times I fill up on gasoline but this can only go so far. I bought a scooter back in June just before gasoline prices hit \$120 a gallon and it has saved a percentage of what we would have spent on filling our car. Americans are aware of the problem and doing what they can with reservation to consequences that may arise in their conservation efforts. The question is not "what should Americans do to avoid the high prices in gasoline?", rather; the question is "Why is the American government not making a reasonable effort to free its people from economic desperation?"

Start drilling now; let us build up a reserve and release the current one, let us start looking for alternatives and renewables. Our understanding will progress as the science behind these progresses.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL, Rexburg.

Since I do not have unlimited income (I am an underpaid Idaho teacher), or someone paying my fuel bills, the rising cost of gas and diesel is taking spending money out of our pockets and into our tanks since we need to drive to perform many daily activities. We also spend less at other retailers since the money went for fuel. We also get less for the same dollar at the store since the price of goods has gone up due to the rising costs of shipping using diesel fuel which is the most expensive and should be the cheapest since it costs less to make and comes off first in the processing of crude oil to fuel. When we spend less the retailers get less and it becomes a vicious circle. Let us start using our own oil and uncap the wells in our country just sitting there. The wildlife will be just fine in Alaska and elsewhere as long as we are careful while drilling and transporting the oil. We need to quit fueling the Arab terrorist groups by buying their oil at inflated prices or at all. Do not tell me the Saudis are our friends. The only thing they like about us is our money.

MEL, Post Falls.

Why do not the forces to be work together to get this solved—or is there no representation for improving the energy quantity?

JIM.

We received an email at work stating that you would like to know how we felt about high energy prices, along with ideas on how to improve the situation. The energy prices are a nuisance to me. I can handle the \$50 per week it takes me to get to and from work. What concerns me are my neighbors who may be on the edge, or who need gasoline to make a living (trucking, farming, construction).

To me the solution seems simple. Increase the supply. Let us drill in ANWR. A vast majority of Alaskans favor the proposition. We could do so in an environmentally responsible way. Let us drill in the area between 50 miles and 200 miles off the coast in those areas where the population is for it. I understand in Virginia, most are in favor of it. I understand that we are the only country that prevents its people from doing this. And, by the way, why have not we opened a refinery in the last 25 years? Many say that even if we drill in ANWR, we will not see any oil for 10 years. That may be, but if we had acted 10 years ago, we would be reaping the benefits of it now. Besides, that might convince foreign countries who have raised their prices so much that we are serious about using our own resources and it may convince them it is time to lower prices. The solution

to energy problems is going to take leadership, not short-sighted thinking.

Also, we need to start building power plants powered by nuclear energy. A power plant that uses petroleum for its power source should no longer be allowed to be built. We can no longer afford to waste petroleum like that, nor should we pollute the air with those wastes, when we can capture and process all nuclear wastes safely.

Of course we can use solar energy including wind where feasible, but that will not solve our energy needs in the future.

We should also not use crops that we need for our food supply to produce ethanol, especially when it takes more energy to produce the ethanol than we receive from the resulting fuel. No wonder food prices are through the roof.

Some want to blame oil companies for making excessive profits. A profit of 6 to 8% does not seem excessive to me. When did it become illegal to make a profit in this country? Higher taxes will not lower the price of gasoline. Let us level the playing field and remove excessive regulations. Sure, global warming is taking place, but we are not the cause of that. It has to do with solar cycles. Spend a winter in Idaho if you want to see global warming at work. The farmers I know had to plant late this season because their fields were covered with snow. The temperature in the world decreased last year. It did not increase. Global warming is not the problem. High energy prices are crippling the economy. The polar bear population has increased, not decreased. We are being sold a bill of goods that we cannot afford to buy.

I know that the liberals are against everything I have proposed. We are opposed to their supposed solution of raising taxes. So does that mean that we have a stalemate and nothing is going to be done? We need leadership.

NORMAN, Idaho Falls.

I own a small 5-employee, garbage company that services the cities of Kuna and Melba and indeed the recent run up in diesel prices from \$3/gallon to the current \$4/gallon in the last ten months has been a major impact on my business of transporting solid waste for my small communities. I have seen my fuel bill increase by nearly \$4,000/month, a 63% increase in that time frame.

As difficult as that is for me, the run up in prices has had a major impact on my employees and their ability to come to work and this is so true for all of Idaho's employees, particularly those on the very bottom of the economic scale of which there are too many in Idaho.

I could go on longer, but you know the impact. More importantly, I think you need to hear from your constituents regarding the solutions. We need a Manhattan-style project to electrify our transportation sector of this country. We need tax incentives for production and purchase of electric vehicles.

We need tax incentives for wind, solar, lithium ion batteries and electric motors (retrofitting out current gas fleet with electric drive trains will provide a sustainable new job creation and a finance business model that will be a boon to our poor, who are being priced out of transportation, and this will be paid for from displaced fuel dollars from foreign oil purchases). We need to re-industrialize the USA to create high paying jobs in the energy sector that will give us sustainable energy so we can get out of our many oil entanglements throughout the world.

Our nation mobilized itself to re-tool its whole industrial base during WWII to create a war machine, plus provide all the oil needed to win that war in the short span of 4-6 years. In the same short time frame we have

bankrupted ourselves in this senseless oil war in Iraq. We need to understand that we need to get off of fossil fuels.

We can and we have to do better. The country needs strong leadership and I have watched you, you are a person of integrity. You can give us the leadership, even though it will not be the party line. I pray you have the courage to make a difference.

The American public deserves a choice to our energy needs and tax incentives for solar and wind energy for our homes, will take us in that direction. I know this is not consistent with the Big Business energy and automobile business model, but I think they do not see the wisdom of making hard changes, tough choices and creating our own energy future.

The whole period of deregulation we have just gone through has not been healthy for our country. Deregulation, from Enron to sub-prime lending is bankrupting our country. For the past 60 years the housing market has been stable and predictable. Deregulation has been regulation for the wealthy and well-positioned. We cannot continue to steal the hope for the middle class on the back of the rich.

There have been two major fallacies foisted on the American public. One is that tax cuts will stimulate jobs and drilling oil will reduce gas prices. The wealthy citizens of our country and the oil companies can be multi-national citizens and their allegiances are to their own wealth accumulation, just a factor of human nature.

We do not have nationalized oil, therefore oil drilling will benefit the oil companies and the highest bidders in the world market, yet the American public is led to believe, oil drilling will have an appreciable impact on our local gas prices, but indeed the nations with more wealth, able to bid and buy the commodity will benefit. We are a debtor nation, unlike China. Producing our own source of energy is critical to changing that reality.

Tax cuts given to the wealthiest of our nation, without a requirement that those tax cuts be re-invested in the USA leaves those individuals the option to take those tax cuts and invest them in the country of their choice, wherever they can get the best return, again leaving the human instinct of wealth accumulation to play out.

If we invest our tax cuts, in our own country and our own energy interests, that will create local high paying jobs, we will be investing in our own future, taking us out of the status of debtor nation.

By the way, I, as well as Warren Buffet, am in the tax bracket that was advantaged by the big tax cuts, and I and Warren Buffet have both felt we would be glad to forego those tax cuts for a strong economy.

Again, I ask that you have the courage to engage with any in congress, in a bipartisan way, who is of a like mind to take us to energy freedom. Jay Inslee the representative from Washington State is a great proponent of energy issues and a person like you, who is a person of integrity. I pray that our representatives in Washington will have the sense of urgency required to take the bold steps needed for the American People.

As well, I might suggest, your staff get the hearing minutes from a Senate hearing held this week on the energy grid where T. Boone Pickens gave testimony where he stated "we cannot drill our way out of our current energy crisis" proposing wind energy as a major part of the solution. It was a very enlightening hearing.

Thank you for your concern for the plight of your constituents.

TIM, Kuna.

As a person living on a fixed income, I find that the soaring costs of energy in all forms

are creating a considerable burden on me. With gas at \$4 per gallon, the cost of everything is sky rocketing.

The U.S. is being held hostage by two bit dictators in the energy market. And it is unnecessary. We are a country that put a man on the moon over forty years ago, yet we have not found ways of using our abundant coal resources in an environmentally safe manner, and I am not seeing anything being done about it. Why?

We spend hundreds of billions on foreign oil imports yet we allow a few vocal nuts to keep us from developing our own resources. We must tap the oil in the Alaska Wildlife Reserve. Contrary to their claims, oil production and wildlife are not incompatible. The noise and bustle of drilling will cause the animals to leave temporarily, after the drillers leave and the pumps and pipelines are in place they will return.

We are often told that the lack of refinery capacity is also a cause of high gas prices. How many new refineries are currently under construction? How many are planned? When was the last completed?

ALFRED, Twin Falls.

I wrote a response to your email about energy yesterday and as I sat here another issue presented itself to me. This is on a community level. My wife and I (with bad forethought) bought The Roxy Theatre in Cascade. I say the above because now many people do not have the extra money to spend seeing movies or plays or concerts. Now after two years, seeing my available credit shrink, and energy costs of my theatre go up, I am looking at hard choices. I have chosen not to hire employees back. This further hurts the overall economy as there are 4 people who now have to find jobs. I have tried, but I cannot find a way to end this bleeding. The power company asked and got two very large rate hikes. Why are we spending almost 2/3 of all the fuel refined in the USA making power for the grids? We have been cut in the heel by a very small but loud group of people who say we should have no more reactors in the USA. Enough—the good of the few do not outweigh the good of the many. We have always been a nation formed on that. From my grandfather to my dad to my service in the military, I know that. I have served for the good of the many. I am still a police officer for the good of the many. It is sure not for the pay. I read bills all of the time that you all are debating on the Hill. I laugh; we spend millions of bucks to help out some performing arts center in New York. I provide the same arts to Americans too. I guess we are too small in Idaho or Cascade, I should say. We could all sit around and cry the blues, but nothing gets done. I put on my uniform 4 days a week and my theatre clothes 7 days a week, 364 days a year. I do this because it is for the good of the many. [I think earmarks should be allowed for projects that provide for the good of the many and my theatre would qualify for assistance.] You, sir, are elected to serve. I hear it just as much as you do. I do not mean that I am your boss. I mean we put you there because we feel you can fix it. I feel, given the responses you have seen, that Idaho's gems have given you the ways to fix the problems you asked about. We have to all give something up. Again, I have not asked you to put me on a spending bill for aid to my 1939 theatre that I am sure will not make it through the year. The small business will not make it that long. When something big happens to this country, everyone asks for federal aid. Major snowstorms happen here, and it is not even reported. Four inches of snow in Florida and every news channel is calling it a disaster. We want this fixed before there is not debate about it. . . It will

be a disaster that no one will have thought could happen. Many politicians say all of the time small business is the backbone of the USA. We are all hurting in this town. We are all getting close to going under. No joke, come up here, I will buy you a movie. I'll show you around like when the mill closed in 2000. We are on the threshold of something very bad. Thanks for your time, I know like me you do not have much to spare.

JASON, Cascade.

#### PAYMENTS TO RADIO HOST

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, several years ago, I started looking at the financial relationships between physicians and drug companies. I am doing this because I am concerned that there is very little transparency on this issue. I have also learned that the little transparency that does exist is not being enforced or is being enforced inconsistently.

For instance, the National Institutes of Health requires researchers to report outside payments to their institution if they receive a grant from the NIH. But I have learned that some researchers are failing to properly report this money.

Recently, I examined payments from pharmaceutical companies to a professor of psychiatry at the University of Cincinnati. I found out that she was not reporting tens of thousand of dollars in outside income.

I then looked at a group of the world's most prominent child psychiatrists, in particular, three researchers at Harvard who have taken millions of dollars from the drug companies. These doctors are funded by several NIH grants, but they were not reporting all of their money from the drug companies as required by NIH regulations.

I then discovered a department chairman at Stanford who founded a company that was seeking approval from the Food and Drug Administration to market a drug for depression. The NIH is funding some research on this drug which was being led by this same Stanford scientist. Because there were some obvious conflicts with this situation, the NIH recently forced Stanford to pull this professor off the grant.

I also sent letters to the University of Texas and Emory University about researchers at their institutions.

I would now like to discuss another troubling aspect about the lack of financial transparency in medicine.

"The Infinite Mind" is a radio show that is independently produced but runs on over 300 public radio stations. It is possibly the most authoritative program on psychology and neuroscience in America. This show has won over 60 journalism awards. According to a biography of the show's host, it has an audience of over half a million people.

Back in my home State of Iowa, "The Infinite Mind" is broadcast on most Sundays, early in the evening. My guess is that thousands of Iowans tune in. According to its own website, "The Infinite Mind" prides itself on its